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"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to progress."

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Table of Contents

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp2–4 in the printed version]

1. Self Discovery, Self Expression and Self Image in the i.t.a. Classroom, by John Downing, Ph.D.*

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In a democracy there is a delicate balance between our concern for the welfare of the individual self and the general well being of the group of society, because the full potential for good in both is necessarily closely interwoven. Sometimes the balance is upset. I believe that in our schools today the balance is being biased too much towards society at the expense of the individual and *paradoxically, this over-emphasis on conformity to apparent social demands at the present day is detrimental to society's needs.* The tremendous acceleration in the technological development of our civilization requires society's members to be more individualistic. We need individuals who can and will discover knowledge and who are able to express themselves and will do so creatively. Also we need people who have healthy self-images which allow them to develop their potential for self-discovery and self-expression with that self-confidence and self-assurance which derives from a

successful commerce with their environment. On the contrary, the full educational development of the individual in these areas is a basis for valid self-evaluation in society. Education's most important aim is to expand the individual's universe of experience of reality and thus to destroy the inequalities of arrogant privilege whose roots feed on ignorance and unthinking, unquestioning, and uncritical obedience of given rules.

For these reasons, we may unashamedly adopt William Shakespeare's advice as our theme in this discussion of the significance of i.t.a. in the education of boys and girls in the English-speaking nations.

This above all – to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou const not then be false to any man.

Controversial issues in i.t.a.

As you may know, I have written about a wide variety of issues in and aspects of i.t.a. in various articles and books. The research project using i.t.a. in Britain took years to complete, and its findings were published in my new book, *Evaluating the Initial Teaching Alphabet,* [1] in Dec. 1967. An international panel of educational and research experts published its opinions of the British
i.t.a. research in another book [2] last year, also. In my book I have reported negative as well as positive research findings on i.t.a., and I have made recommendations for the improvement of the i.t.a. writing-system. [3] There are a number of other controversial educational and research issues in i.t.a., and I have reviewed the complete range of topics regarding i.t.a. in another recent article. [4] This latter article should help any educator wishing to explore these other aspects of i.t.a. which time and space precludes discussing here.

This discussion focuses on the value of i.t.a. in facilitating self-discovery, self-expression, and in the development of a healthy self-image. I should warn you right now, before we begin, that many people using i.t.a. neither recognize or desire or appreciate these effects on i.t.a. and that, unless teachers consciously seek and plan the children's experiences with i.t.a. to achieve these aims, they may not get these effects. *How* i.t.a. is presented in i.t.a. books and in other i.t.a. classroom activities is of vital significance if its use is to benefit our girls and boys.

Self Discovery in i.t.a.

i.t.a.'s most important educational value is the way in which it facilitates the discovery approach. More and more laymen as well as professional educators are recognizing that our present-day and future society can only survive if we make it our central aim in education to preserve and foster children's natural curiosity and drive for discovery. Man's store of knowledge already has become too vast for any single individual to carry even the knowledge of one specialised discipline 'in his head.' Therefore, cramming students with facts is a hopelessly outmoded approach. Our aim instead has to be to help children to develop the skills of learning, studying, discovering and structuring which will make them effective in finding and using knowledge stored in libraries, computors, and other such devices.

The most important skills of this type cut right across all the content areas, and there are ways of ensuring that they do this more efficiently and rapidly. Specifically, we must plan children's

learning experiences so that they are not narrowly limited to the present task. As Jerome Bruner [5] says:

> "Learning should not only take us somewhere; it should allow us later to go further more easily."

This applies not only to learning and study skills, but also to the development of *attitudes.* Our educational methods should always be designed deliberately to encourage positive attitudes towards new learning and new discovery.

i.t.a. can play an important role in the application of these principles of "learning how to learn" (as Bruner calls it), and the discovery approach in education. For example, Bruner stresses the importance of

> "learning initially not a skill but a general idea, which can then be used as a basis for recognizing subsequent problems as special cases of the idea originally mastered. This type of transfer is at the heart of the educational process."

One such "general idea" is the linguistic structure of English. A real grasp of the ground plan of English can be of enormous value in learning tasks in all areas of the language arts. Unfortunately, teachers who have strived to give children such a frame of reference have been frustrated by the way English is conventionally written or rather spelled, i.e. our traditional orthography (T.O.)

In contrast, the structural relations of written English and spoken English are clarified by the use of a phonemic spelling system such as i.t.a. What is more, the discovery approach is greatly facilitated by this clarification of the structure of English. For example, compare the i.t.a. and T.O. versions of the sentence: "I like my pie." The sound of "eye" occurs in each of these four words. In T.O. this structural feature is concealed because the common phoneme is written differently each time. In i.t.a., it is always written the same so that it looks as well as sounds the same. No artificial and abnormal vocabulary or sentence structure is needed in i.t.a. to bring out this regularity of grapheme-phoneme relations. Meaningful everyday sentences can be used and discovery of these phonemic relations will still occur.

This is but one of the ways in which i.t.a. clarifies the structure of English. Two other ways should be mentioned: (a) The number of phonemes in a word is generally indicated by the number of i.t.a. characters – e.g., the word "thought" has 3 phonemes. In T.O. it has 7 letters, and there is no visual clue to indicate the number of phonemes. In i.t.a. it has 3 i.t.a. characters for the 3 phonemes, thus indicating the true structure clearly and correctly.

(b) Readingwise i.t.a. does not use its characters ambiguously. That is to say: every i.t.a. character always has only one pronunciation. But the letters in T.O. often represent several different phonemes, e.g. letter o in *no, on, one, onion,* etc. T.O.'s ambiguity gives many false clues to structure. This is abolished by i.t.a. But these opportunities in i.t.a. will be to a large extent wasted and frittered away if the materials and teaching methods are not designed to take advantage of i.t.a.'s clarification of structure and consequent facilitation of the discovery approach. For example, the dull formal abstract drills of sterotyped work books seem likely to cancel out these important benefits.

Self Expression in i.t.a.

Another very important feature of the i.t.a. program which I developed in British Infants schools is the application of i.t.a. in encouraging children's creative writing. This involves the use of *the language experience approach to reading* along side a suitable series of i.t.a. basal readers. But that is not sufficient. Much sooner than is usual in most T.O. language experience classes, the i.t.a. pupil should be encouraged to make his own creative contributions in writing. Indeed, the i.t.a. benefit most valued by British Infants School teachers is the way in which i.t.a. helps children to "speak and think with their pencils."

Again, this important opportunity in i.t.a. is likely to be lost if the i.t.a. program is too sterotyped and textbook centered. Too much reliance on workbooks may destroy this spontaneous love of creative writing. It may also be severely damaged if too much emphasis is placed on spelling, letter-formation, or writing between guide lines on the paper. Ideally, everything which distracts the attention of the child from the aim of creativity should be removed. Malmquist's [6] research in Sweden has shown clearly the futility and waste that occurs if teachers are preoccupied with such formal aspects of writing in the first 2 years of school. Creativity is so valuable (and a scarce commodity among adults) that we ought to foster it by showing children how highly we value it. This means de-emphasising spelling and letter-formation. This is an essential element in the original i.t.a. educational program which I developed in Britain.

i.t.a. and the Self Image

I indicated earlier that attitudes are as important as skills in learning. Bruner's comment on this is highly significant for us.

> "Mastery of the fundamental ideas of a field involves not only the grasping of general principles, but also the development of an attitude toward learning and inquiry; toward guessing and hunches, toward the possibility of solving problems on one's own."

Furthermore, he indicates that to develop such attitudes:

> "An important ingredient is a sense of excitement about discovery of regularities of previously unrecognized relations and similarities, with a resulting sense of self-confidence in one's abilities."

T.O. does much harm to children's self-respect. They frequently fail *because their reasoning is correct, but English spelling is unreasonable.* Through this they are led to believe that they are "wrong," and, their reasonable hunches are unreliable. In contrast, i.t.a.'s regularity helps more children to be successful in their reasonable hunches, and consequently they are encouraged to further efforts and application of reasoning to problem-solving.

For instance, Wilkinson [7] in her report of the i.t.a. research of Bolton, Lancashire states:

> "All of these (teachers) agree that children bring to their task, greater confidence and acquire more quickly the assurance that comes with the belief that they will succeed."

In developing self-confidence, too, it must again be emphasised that i.t.a.'s potential may be wasted if properly designed i.t.a. materials and teaching methods are not used. It is essential to individualize teaching if the self-image benefits of i.t.a. are to be fully realized. In particular, I may

mention the way in which this benefit is sometimes lost through too early transition from i.t.a. to T.O. The average child in the original British i.t.a. program which I developed, uses i.t.a. for the first two years, altho many faster learners transfer to T.O. in the second year and some transfer to T.O. in the first year. Slower learners must be allowed even longer than 2 years to complete the program.

Responsibility for Creativity-Discovery Approach to i.t.a.

It is only fair that I warn you that the i.t.a. program I have outlined (which we might call the "Creativity-Discovery i.t.a. Approach") is only one of several different methods of applying i.t.a. in beginning reading. For example, Sir James Pitman **[8]**, chief-designer of the i.t.a. symbols and spelling, made it clear, when he first put the alphabet before the public in 1960, that he did not believe that i.t.a. should be associated automatically with any particular educational method. He said:

> "It is important to note that 'teaching method' is not involved. The teacher is free to teach any subject, including reading by i.t.a. **[9]** in whatever way he thinks best."

The methods I have outlined are the ones I have developed in my application of i.t.a. in the schools. As a result of my research I have incorporated these methods in my own published i.t.a. reading program, the *Downing Readers* **[10]**. Other professional colleagues believe that i.t.a. should be taught differently, and I have compared all these different methods in another recent article **[11]**. For example, in my i.t.a. program as outlined to you today, I have stressed (a) the guided discovery approach, (b) creativity in writing rather than formal drills in letter-formation, etc., (c) fostering self-confidence by individualizing the teaching and postponing the transition to T.O. as long as necessary but typically encouraging transfer in the second grade.

To be fair to you and my professional colleagues who hold different views on the best way to maximize i.t.a.'s educational potential, I feel bound to urge you to consider other possible ways of teaching with i.t.a. For instance, note the very different approach to i.t.a. stated by Ohanian **[12]** which she says she discerned in the i.t.a. *Early to Read* series by Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer". She stated that in i.t.a. as typified by this series: (a) "the mode of teaching and learning is largely through telling and being told respectively and much less through guided discovery." "Children are taught to write each symbol-sound after it is introduced," and "the order of (teaching) the symbol-sounds was determined from two studies." (c) Transition from i.t.a. to T.O. is "encouraged" usually about April and May in the First Grade.

From Ohanian's review, it seems obvious that these are some very important differences between the Mazurkiewicz and Tanyzer i.t.a. approach and the Downing i.t.a. approach. Perhaps they need separate labels to help educators to discriminate between them. I have suggested the "Creativity-Discovery i.t.a. approach" as the name for mine. From this comparison, it must also be obvious that i.t.a. cannot be regarded as one single method of teaching. On the contrary, the whole spectrum of methods of teaching reading can be applied in i.t.a. as well as in T.O. You have to choose not only between i.t.a. and T.O., but *within i.t.a. there is a very important choice between widely differing educational approaches.*

Your choice must be free. If you are an i.t.a. teacher or planning to introduce i.t.a. in your school, you should be aware of these differences (and others in other available i.t.a. series) and study them to determine *which educational approach to i.t.a. you think will best suit your pupils.*

Obviously, I believe that the i.t.a. approach which I have developed and described here is the superior method, but it is only fair to you also that I confess that the educational philosophy and values underlying my i.t.a. approach would be just the same if I were using T.O. In summary, the educational aims and values which I have tried to achieve in my particular approach to i.t.a. are the more fundamental thing for me. I use i.t.a. in my series merely because it is a much better alphabet for securing those aims and values, whereas, T.O. is a very poor tool for this purpose. However, when a new and improved i.t.a. or some other simplified alphabet comes along to do the job even better than the present i.t.a., I will gladly change the alphabet again – but not the fundamental educational aim of providing children with opportunities for self-discovery, self-expression and self-confidence in their first experiences with written and printed English.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp4,5 in the printed version]

2. Is Remedial Reading Necessary?, by Raymond E. Laurita°

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Listening to administrators, teachers and parents discuss the function of the remedial reading teacher can be a most confusing and frustrating experience. The work of these specialists has been and continues to be widely misunderstood. Finding a scapegoat for this unwholesome state of affairs is difficult, for an extremely poor job of explaining his function has been done. It is hard indeed to find two people, even among those in the field, who agree about the exact function of the remedial reading teacher and how he carries out his work of correcting reading difficulties.

For my own part, I feel it is time for those in the field to come to their own rescue and do something about it. It is unfair both to the remedial people on the one hand, and parents and teachers on the other, to remain silent while the misunderstanding grows out of proportion.

Primarily, the remedial specialist is a teacher who has at his disposal only those tools available to any teacher anywhere. There is no magic formula, no specific set of guidelines to follow that are different in any way from those of the classroom teacher. The difference in educational technique is subtle and difficult to define. It can best be described as a difference in degree rather than in kind.

The reading specialist performs no quick miracles. He cannot even be partly successful without the wholehearted support of both the teachers and the parents of the disabled child. The materials he uses are the same available to all teachers tho they may be applied in a more personal and individual manner in the confined atmosphere of the remedial class.

Success depends in a large measure on the specialist's ability to diagnose accurately the cause of the difficulty. He must then somehow motivate the child to succeed where failure has discouraged the child repeatedly in the past. It is in the intimate, therapeutic atmosphere of the small remedial group that this rebuilding process can best take place, for the child who cannot read is truly sick. He exhibits no visible identifying deformations nor physical defects but he is nevertheless suffering a degree of mental anguish that is debilitating. The depth of this torment can be observed by examining the close relationship between the incidence of emotional upset and school failure due to reading disability.

The child who cannot read is effectively stifled from finding expression in the most elemental way, for he is cut off from sharing in the vital processes of communication. His growth is stunted in direct proportion to the degree of his disability. His recovery is likewise in direct ratio to the amount and concentration of the help he receives.

To expect overnight cures of children who have languished in the throes of failure in the everyday activities of the classroom for a number of years, is to be woefully ignorant of the depth and complexity of reading retardation. Rehabilitation cannot occur quickly, and in all too many cases, it cannot occur at all. Some children have become so defeated by failure they have lost the will to recover. To see a child reach this state of demoralization is to witness the complete negation of the whole idea of education.

Following the absence of guideleines for the establishment of effective remedial programs, the schools today are the recipients of a crazy-quilt pattern of remedial classes that leave much to be desired. Too many schools have adopted a *wait and see attitude that invites disaster.* They allow children to develop into reading failures in the primary grades and only then after these children have proven to everyone's satisfaction they are really crippled, do they sometimes get help.

It is inconceivable how we as teachers can stand idly by during the most crucial and formative years of the child's school life and watch mercilessly as he suffers the humiliation of repeated failure to learn how to decipher his own language.

Remedial classes initiating instruction later than the 3rd grade are in grave danger of failing to aid the child. If the child is a severe reading cripple by this stage of development, the chances of recovery are extremely limited. The cards are stacked against him, for in our developmental system of education, while the remedial child is busy correcting fundamental weaknesses, the remainder of the class is advancing into an ever expanding world of new concepts and factual matter. It is only the child with a specific difficulty, able to be diagnosed and treated quickly that really profits from most remedial classes. For the others, the reading class provides little else than a welcome respite from the pressures of the regular classroom.

Yet the answer to the question, "Is remedial reading necessary?" must be a resounding yes. In fact, any school failing to provide remedial help for its reading disabled is remiss in its duty. These children's presence in every school is an educational fact of life. We all know we have reading failures today and we expect we will have them tomorrow. But if we are ever to arrive at a time when this tragic condition is limited to the gross child suffering severe mental, physical, emotional or psychological trauma, there must be a shift in movement. The emphasis in remedial reading classes must be away from correction and in the direction of more humane and beneficial programs of preventive remedial therapy.

Classes aimed at preventing reading failure should be initiated early enough to prevent the child with relatively minor difficulty from becoming severely retarded. It is my opinion that a large percentage of today's reading failures are made up of children whose needs went untreated and often unnoticed in the primary grades. It is this segment of the school population that we are failing out of neglect. They can be helped, but not after three, four, or five years of failure. By this time they are almost sure dropouts.

Effective remedial programs can be designed to detect potential reading disabilities as early as the first grade. Help rendered at this time is infinitely more beneficial than months or even years of help at later grade levels. It is at this time that the problems of the child appear in their pristine state, uncomplicated by an overlay of complicating emotional and educational side effects.

Remedial reading isn't a frill as some are prone to regard it. It must become an integral part of any school system contending it is doing the total job of education. What is required on the part of the school is better understanding of the deep suffering of children who fail. Once this human factor has been adequately assessed and understood, there can be no other course of action than to search out and find teachers willing to become involved in the prevention of reading failure among the very young.

Looking at the situation from an economic standpoint, the cost in wasted lives and ineffectual rehabilitative programs for the school failure is fantastic. A program that could salvage even a small percentage of today's school failures would be a saving of incalculable proportion.

Whatever the motivation, the presence of remedial programs in every school should be an unquestioned reality and the search for ever increasing effectiveness in preventing reading failure a worthwhile goal to strive for. The return on any investment of time, money and personnel will be the saving of countless children from the ignominy of a life of ignorance of their own language – perhaps also of a life of joblessness, and crime.

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3. Divide and Join, by Ivor Darreg*

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Because it is so frequent as well as being small, the hyphen has been sadly overlooked, yet what would the task of reading be like if we had to get along without it?

By the above title we mean to imply that the hyphen has two principal uses which are in a way opposed: to split a word into syllables so that a line of type may be ended before it runs off the edge of the page, and to join two words which might mean something quite different if not so joined.

In current publishing practice the situation is further complicated: the letter-writing office typist does not have to justify her right-hand margins, and so may not appreciate the problems facing the linotype operator (especially on the narrow-column newspaper), who is continually *forced* to divide a word at the end of a line. No author can predict where his words will be divided by the stranger in the publishing company who sets the type. Both the word-division and compounding practices differ from place to place-no such uniformity has been achieved in the use of hyphens as has been attained in spelling.

Furthermore, very few typewriters have a real hyphen as opposed to a dash, and practice differs widely among typists as to their substitute for a dash. This causes some confusion; but, for lack of space, we shall have to leave aside the problems encountered in the use of different kinds of dashes.

In the United States the situation is further complicated by the fact that the Government Printing Office, altho it accepts the Merriam-Webster Dictionary's spelling of words, does not accept its hyphenations, and therefore issues a Handbook entitled *Word Division.* Now that a number of rival dictionaries have reached the market, we can expect still more differences of opinion. Also, automation has entered the picture: Several large newspapers have invested princely sums in computers specially programmed to set type to a prescribed width of line, and in their "memory" units a set of rules for word-division has been implanted, subject of course to the limitations of electronic hardware. Now and then this will result in a weird, "inhuman" use of hyphens.

Thus it would be almost useless for us to set down a list of rules for using hyphens here – someone would be bound to object to almost every item, and have authority or usage to back up the objections. A further consideration is that we are on the threshold of a revolution in printing-photographic processes of many kinds, offset replacing letterpress, a bewildering variety of electronic apparatus, and new kinds of typewriters taking over the work formerly entrusted to specialists operating typesetting machines. The demand for speed and volume, coupled with the purchase of so many of these new machines by business firms, has noticeably relaxed the requirements that right-hand margins be kept even-which of course, means that far fewer word-divisions will be needed in the future. Certain legibility research seems to indicate that the mechanically uniform justified right-hand margin is not more legible than the "ragged" typewriter lines, after all.

In almost any language except English, word-division, i.e. separating the syllables in any word, is childishly simple. The rules for Spanish or Russian syllabification are quite short and easily learned. This greatly simplifies the teaching of reading, since the children practice *syllables* before they tackle whole words. Apart from the question of phonetic or phonemic spelling, this ease of detecting the boundaries of syllables is an important factor in the more rapid progress of reading

pupils where those languages are spoken. The fact that the Japanese script is almost but not quite a syllabary, somewhat mitigates the stupendous difficulty of learning to read that language.

Recent linguistic and acoustical research has established the peculiarity of *syllables* as opposed to words or single phonemes. It is thus likely that the robot steno or phonetic typewriter connected to a microphone, automatically writing down one's words as soon as they are spoken, will have to be based on syllables rather than letters. There are not as many intervals of silence between written words, a fact that should give inventors of such machines considerable pause of thought.

The use of hyphens, then, is governed by the spoken language. Words are usually divided *as they are pronounced*. Thus many homographs will take a different hyphening according to their pronunciation and meaning: pres-ent tense, but pre-sent arms. Just de-serts, but barren des-erts. Phonograph rec-ord, but re-cord a deed. Unfortunately this does not resolve all homographs or any homophones. *Primer*, as a child's book or as a charge to set off an explosive, or the first coat of paint, for instance.

This is a good place to ask: *Why* so much difficulty deciding where to divide an English word? One reason is the conflict between dividing according to pronunciation and the natural, logical dividing according to prefixes, roots, and suffixes. This problem, by the way, is also encountered in the compiled language Esperanto, where the clear, obvious principle of syllable-division common to most European languages collides with the equally clear principle of building-block, modular construction of long words out of short, invariable parts. A vertical line | had to be used in textbooks to show this word-building mechanism, since the syllable-dividing hyphen would have been dangerously misleading.

Getting back to English, we might cite the words prej-udice, pref-erable, so divided and pronounced in spite of the fact that they contain the prefix pre. This is hard enough for the average adult to understand. What must it be for the 7-year-old child? Note that spelling reform, or even alphabet reform with something as extreme as the Shaw Alphabet, would not solve the word-division problem, and would not resolve the conflict between pronunciation and derivation. Indeed, the various schemes which retain the th, sh, ch and the other digraphs will actually aggravate the problem, for hyphens might have to be inserted into such words as: short-hand, en-gage, gas-house, rat-hole, etc., not to mention the problems incurred with vowel digraphs.

We might also mention the occasional use of the hyphen as a substitute for a diaeresis (probably started by a lazy printer and continued by typewriter and linotype operators) in such words as co-op (the abbreviation even if cooperate is written solid), re-enter, de-emphasize. This practice calls attention to a desirable precaution: Do not divide a long word at the end of a line in such a way that the first part of it will be mispronounced or misunderstood. For instance, rein-carnation, rein-forcement, tho often seen, are very bad divisions. Fac-ing and larg-er look as tho you were deliberately and maliciously misleading the reader about the pronunciation of the c or g, even tho these divisions are authorized. Rag-ing is even less excusable.

As we come to the other principal use of hyphens, for compounding, we should not ignore the special case of a hyphenated word being split at the end of a line, at the hyphen, with the result that the reader will not know whether this is a normally hyphenated word, or a word normally printed solid. The present writer uses a second hyphen at the beginning of the next line, when such a case occurs in a MS., but the usual advice to authors is to put a double hyphen (equality sign) at the end of the line in an emergency of this sort, thus: =. We can think of cases where this might cause ambiguity, or be ignored by the typesetter.

Parallel with the Saxon-and-Latin makeup of English, the English practice in compounding stands midway between that of French, which uses separate words, such as noun and adjective, for a compound idea, and that of German, which runs nearly all such words together without hyphens. If there is any tendency, it seems to be in the direction of German practice ("setting words solid"), but this trend is very gradual.

British and American practice are often at odds. The use or non-use of a hyphen may often be the telltale giveaway that reveals when an Englishman is trying to write American or vice versa.

Whether a given series of speech-sounds is a compound word, or is two or more separate words, is not determined by the way it is written in English. Grammar school, hot dog, phone book, are spoken as units on a par with soft-ball, resting-place, and eyeshade (or is it eye-shade?). The difference between a mere juxtaposition of words and a compound is expressed in speech by a complex pattern of stresses and junctures, which is very subtle. Quite often a foreigner will master everything about spoken English but this. A famous example is lighthouse-keeper vs. light housekeeper. The same sounds with different stress and rhythm patterns.

Sometimes the orderly progression of a phrase from two words to a hyphenated word to a "solid" word is arrested by the odd or ambiguous visual appearance of certain letter-combinations. Music hall or music-hall would tend to be mispronounced with a "ch" sound if it were written musichall. For that matter, the name Evesham was originally Eve's Ham and did not then have an sh-sound. Re-wind often gets a hyphen to break up the digraph ew; so does re-wed.

Compounds with genuine double consonants (i.e. two spoken consonants, not merely written ones) will often get a hyphen to emphasize this fact, as coat-tail, rat-tail, or tail-less rather than tailless. If three of the same letter might come together, a hyphen is a frequent remedy: skill-less, mistress-ship. (Come to think of it, this is a very odd phobia; no one shudders when three numbers come together, as in 1999 or 2000.)

If you must have a rule-of-thumb, when in doubt, use a hyphen. That is, if you can't make up your mind and there is no reliable authority to turn to, prefer the hyphenated compound to the two-separate-word or the solid form. Even if it turns out to be the wrong choice, you will probably have at least one other person on your side, and if the writing is for publication, someone may correct it.

When the robot typing machines take over, you will have to pronounce all punctuation, and we may find ourselves making funny noises like those Victor Borge made in his famous comedy skit some years back. Could it be that we have a foreshadowing of this in the inelegant but necessary newscaster's "Quote ..... unquote"?

More suggestions on this same subject can be found in *Today's Secretary*, May, 1966, page 47.

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More and more human history is becoming a race between Education and Catastrophy.

H. G. Wells.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp7–9 in the printed version]

4. Sprechspur – a Means of Writing More Easily, by Gertrude Hildreth, Ph.D.*

* Visiting Professor of Education, American University of Beirut, Lebanon.

What is Sprechspur? The two German words, Sprech and Spur, literally translated mean "speech" and "trace, clue or track." Combined, they form the name of a simplified phonetic sign system for quickly recording speech that was invented by a German linguist, the late Dr. Felix V. Kunowski in the 1930's. Altho the system was first published in 1942, little attention has been paid to it outside of Germany. A brief mention of the device appeared in *Psychological Abstracts* soon after publication, but apparently it received no further notice in English language publications from that time to the present, except for a brief notice in the *Spelling Progress Bulletin* for Winter, 1964.

Recently, through the courtesy of Prof. Dr. Walter Schultze, head of the DeutschesInstitut f'ur Internationale Pddagogische Forschung, Frankfort a/M, I obtained the name of the present head of the Sprechspur Kreis, Prof. Dr. Gottfried Rahn in Hanover. Dr. Rahn is the head of the research group that is keeping the movement alive as well as Editor of the *Sprechspur Journal.* The literature that he sent me on the subject furnished the basis of this report. One of his bulletins relates to the use of Sprechspur in teaching children to read and write.

If Sprechspur has something vital to contribute to educational theory and methods in literacy training, why is it not better known today? The author's death in 1942 soon after publication of the first reports is partly responsible. There has never been any intensive publicity to promote the scheme, and apparently all publications have been in the German language. Furthermore, from the outset, Sprechspur was considered by many to be "just another system of stenography." There is no Sprechspur symbol typewriter or printing press so far as I know. In fact, it does not seem possible for it to be put on a typewriter as it is generally written because the symbols for a word are generally joined making a wiggly line, somewhat like shorthand. But Sprechspur is very definitely not "just another shorthand system" as one author pointed out in a bulletin published in 1963, urging a determined effort to dissociate the two forms of inscription.

In view of the present-day concern over children's learning difficulties due to limitations of the traditional English alphabet code and spelling idiocyncrasies, perhaps there is something to be learned from a radically different but phonetically consistent code. As I glanced through the packet of materials, I was impressed with Dr. Kunowski's underlying theory as well as the reports of educational experimentation.

Features of the Sprechspur Code (SC)

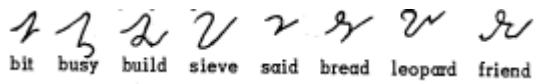
Sprechspur is a graphic code with signs to represent all the speech sounds in world languages, formed with miniscule strokes, both curved and straight lines, and starting from left to right and in different positions below and above the horizontal writing line. One diacritical dot is used to distinguish two otherwise identical forms. The utmost simplicity characterizes the system of signs, which is probably the most economical phonetic code for recording a language that has ever been devised.

The system adheres strictly to the one-sound-one-sign principle: there is a unique sign exclusively for each distinctive sound, 36 different signs for German and 41 for English. There is no resemblance between Sprechspur and any other alphabetic code in use today the world around. There is no attempt at compatibility with the roman alphabet as is the case with i.t.a. In spelling, the scheme eliminates any irregularities and inconsistencies in German, French and English words. Silent and double letters are avoided and there are no separate forms for capital and "small" letters.

Some of the strokes easily join to form ligatures for certain sound combinations. Syllables and words emerge as distinct patterns that serve to speed up reading and writing.

At first glance, a Sprechspur sentence resembles shorthand in overall appearance, and it has some resemblance to Arabic hand script. Altho the system was originally devised for the German language, it has since been developed as an international code based on the International Phonetic Alphabet. There are now Sprechspur codes for all the major languages including Greek, Turkish, Hebrew and Chinese, as well as some minor ones that have a written form.

The great economy in handwriting and printing space is illustrated with such a word as "sugar" with four phonemes which in joined Sprechspur symbols occupy scarcely the amount of space required for two Roman letters. Here are some samples of words in Sprechspur with the English language equivalents:



In writing, faint dotted lines running across the paper are required for correct spatial orientation of the strokes above and below the line.

Historical Developments

In the 1930's the new invention was referred to as Wurzelschrift (root writing), indicating Dr. Kunowski's effort to reduce writing to the simplest possible hand movements, but he used Sprechspur as a more appropriate title in the first publications. In 1935 some experiments were begun with Sprechspur in writing and reading instruction with Volksschule children as a preliminary step to traditional Gothic or Roman. Similar experiments were carried on for some years; the movement appears to have reached a peak in the 1950's, but from then on it tended to die down and not much further attention was paid to it.

The Underlying Theory of Sprechspur

The name of the system itself affords a key to Dr. Kunowski's theory about handwriting as a related, secondary form of verbal behavior. Speech and the motor movements of writing are bound closely together as two aspects of expressive movement of an individual. In the early years, the rhythm of writing (or marking on a flat surface) accompanies the rhythm of speech. Both aspects of verbal behavior involve rhythm and form, movement and visual percepts, orientation in time (speech); orientation in space, writing. In recording speech by means of handwriting, the eyes, ears, hands and mouth (including the tongue) are all engaged. The Klang associations of speech are articulated and synchronized with the writing strokes made by the hand in one expressive act. The schematic design looks like this:

$$\text{mouth} \quad \frac{\text{eyes}}{\text{ears}} \quad \text{hand}$$

Dr. Kunowski believed that any interference in the interplay of these four sensory-motor outlets predicted retardation or failure in school learning of basic skills. Sprechspur, he urged, bound the four aspects together to a degree that was scarcely possible with standard German. (GTO)

This theory was based on Dr. Kunowski's own observations of children's development in speech, in eye-hand coordination, and in children's early propensity for scribbling and marking. Handwriting derives from the child's first scribbles and later strokes with a marking instrument on a smooth surface. As the child emerges from the toddling stage, speech and arm movements go together. The

three-year-old shows typical "auf" and "ab" movements of arm and hand in exploiting the uses of a marker. This "pretend" writing gives him satisfaction and a strong sense of achievement. Sprechspur, in turn, builds on the child's "pretend" writing as the first medium for recording speech in a symbolic sign system. The strokes are made rhythmicaly to the accompaniment of the speech sounds in pronouncing words.

The widest applications of Sprechspur have been in three fields: as a training alphabet for children learning to read and write, as an aid to second language learning, and to facilitate business practices. Experiments with Sprechspur as a training device for the school beginner mentioned in an earlier section have borne out the author's theory. Children's early explorations with crayon and pencil are easily converted into SC strokes which introduce the beginners to the mysteries of writing and reading through symbol signs. Reading is learned through the medium of the child's own writing. When the handwriting strokes synchronize with the sounds of the spoken word, as is the case with SC, then learning to read is "a breeze," a simple associative process. The difficulties of the typical beginner with GTO are circumvented because this simplified system avoids the complexities of the GothicRoman print and handscript. Remember that before 1940 the German language still employed Gothic-style print and the elaborate handwriting based upon it. SC eliminates the tedious, unrewarding memory task and handwriting drills involved in the Gothic-Roman "hieroglyphics."

Some years ago, a good pastor who had high hopes of a classical education for the young nephew he had taken under his charge, was dismayed to see the struggle the little boy had with the letter ipsilon (Y) alone. What a long road to travel to Latin and Greek! Teachers realized that they had in SC a system that went beyond any other they had known in ease of learning the skills of literacy. Children not only caught on to SC faster than any other writing system, but it helped them in every phase of reading. Three-fourths of the way through the first year the typical six-year-old could easily write words, syllables, and easy sentences. By the end of the first year he could do expressive writing based on his own ideas. He could write almost as well as the teacher and interpret simple sentences the teacher had written; and his writing was about as rapid as speech. The whole thing was so simple that non-teacher trained parents could assist their children with practice at home. Thru the use of SC the pupils readily caught on to the underlying "alphabetic principles," i.e., letters are keys to the sounds in words, and sounds that recur in words have their own letter signs. Even with months of traditional German orthography or irregular English T.O., children may fail to catch on to this relationship.

The "Whole" method, the Method Globale through which children learn to read and write with emphasis on language meaning from the beginning is the logical method for Sprechspur. After a bit of preliminary practice to familiarize the child with pencil strokes and pencil control, writing is practiced with whole words and syllables; there is no long-drawn out drill on isolated letters and sounds as a first step. In reading, the child reacts to the words and syllables he has written, learning by grasping word patterns; the words are arrayed in simple sentences such as the child speaks and comprehends. At the same time or later on he uses readers-a series of five that have been prepared for grades One thru Five. Thus the skills of reading and writing are interrelated thruout the entire period of initial instruction. In fact, oral expression, reading, and writing are treated as facets of one skill.

There is no gainsaying the fact that SC is after all a transition code system for the beginners-nothing more than an introductory step to "real" writing and reading, as the children call it. Everyone knows that sooner or later the children must learn to read and write standard German.

Workers with SC have found the code of direct aid in speech training for pupils with retarded speech development and those who speak dialects of the language. Thru drills in relating writing strokes to the pronunciation of words, correct or standard speech patterns become habituated. SC

has proved beneficial in overcoming stuttering that sometimes occurs at the onset of formal schooling. The more natural rhythmic movements and the absence of tension in writing the SC strokes apparently explains the improvement in these cases.

Considerable use has been made of SC in initiating reading and writing in the case of children with developmental lag, and for therapy with slow learners, the wordblind child, and other handicapped pupils. There has also been some experimentation with SC in teaching adult illiterates to whom symbol learning of the ABC type seems formidable. Sprechspur has proved to be a "natural" for helping foreign-speaking people get hold of a new language. Even tho the theory may seem a bit far-fetched, reports of research support these claims.

People may ask, isn't Sprechspur a detour rather than a route to "right" reading and spelling? No, the fact of the matter is that the transition problem is minimized, oddly enough, by the lack of compatibility between SC and GTO. Negative inhibition is avoided because there is no conflict between the two systems.

One of the most interesting findings relates to children's discoveries of inconsistencies in GTO when they first begin to write and read standard script and text. At first they're puzzled, then amazed as they become conscious of the "errors" in "right" writing; and they become adept at detecting discrepancies between tongue sounds and hand script. Up to this time with SC they were able to trust the signs to indicate sounds of words. If GTO causes them astonishment, think what would happen in English with far more irregularity than German.

Are there some limitations in the Sprechspur code that should be mentioned from the standpoint of perception, legibility and other factors? At first sight, the different signs look quite similar. Wouldn't a child have a hard time learning to distinguish 36 or 41 similar strokes and dashes? The perception principle involved here is that similar items of a given class that are unfamiliar appear to be more similar than when they have become familiar thru acquaintance. "All babies look alike," we say, but mothers know different. Research with Sprechspur has proved that the assumption of confusion between signs is imaginary. Not only do the separate signs become distinct with practice, but the joining of strokes to form words and syllables produces easily distinguished patterns.

What about legibility? Apparently there is no more of a problem here than with cursive script based on Roman letters or with Arabic. Careful, precise writing is always more legible than hurridly formed and joined letter signs. The children are taught to work carefully, and their initial efforts are slate or blackboard size. The orientation of the strokes on, above or below the line constitutes part of the distinction between signs; hence confusion will result unless the correct placement of each sign is observed.

Here are some references on Sprechspur from a comprehensive list of references on the subject:

1. Felix v. Kunowski, *Sprechspur fur alle Sprachen and Mundarten,* 1963. Pub. W. G. v. Kunowski, Detmold, Germany.
2. Gottfried Rahn. 15 Jahre Sprechspur, (in *Sprechen an Spuren,* 1956-57).
3. Gottfried Rahn. Wirkliche Ganzheit im Ersten Lese-und Schreiben Untericht. *Schola, vol.* 3, 1956.
4. E. Eckermann and G. Rahn. *Handbuch der Sprechspur,* Hannover, Germany.
5. *Sprechen and Spuren* – a review. *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* vol. 4, No. 4, Winter, 1964.

The Journal, *Sprechen and Spuren,* is a quarterly published by the Sprechspur group in Hannover.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp9,10 in the printed version]

5. G. B. S. and i.t.a., by Abraham Tauber, Ph.D. and Rhea S. Tauber"

*a talk given at the Fifth International i.t.a. Conference at Hofstra Univ. New York, July 17, 1968.
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In these days, to be over 30 is considered by some to have outlived one's usefulness. 10 year old i.t.a. can, therefore, claim to be "in"- dynamic, youthful, and vital.

Paradoxically, however, it is still a status symbol to be able to trace one's ancestry back to the Mayflower, or – as in this case – back to the place from which the Pilgrims set sail. And here, i.t.a. scores again.

At the Fourth International i.t.a. Conference in 1967, Godfrey Dewey made the point in his paper, "i.t.a. – Child and Parent of Spelling Reform," [1] that i.t.a. had eminently respectable progenitors – scholars and educators, philologists and linguists. Most had made their contributions as spelling reformers. In his Preface, Dewey graciously acknowledged the source of much of his material in a work by the present speaker [4], titled "Spelling Reform in the United States." It will appear shortly in an up-dated version to be called *Better English Thru Simplified Spelling: A History of Spelling Reform.* [5] This title should indicate more clearly the concern felt by all spelling reformers that children should learn to read English more easily, as well as to write and speak it. i.t.a, of course, is the high point of that fascinating history of the work of spelling reformers, even tho it is not intended as a spelling reform.

That i.t.a. had its generic beginning in the work of spelling reformers is well told in Maurice Harrison's *Instant Reading: The Story of the Initial Teaching Alphabet.* [2] Harrison makes the observation (p.3) that in simplifying spelling for the beginning reader, Sir James Pitman was building on previous work: "The dedicated men who first urged this approach to the teaching of reading were spelling reformers." Harrison goes on to say: "No history of the events which have culminated in the present amazing success of the Initial Teaching Alphabet in schools would, however, be complete, nor indeed would the causes of that success be comprehended, without knowing the story of the spelling reformers."

The validity of these observations must not diminish for one moment the luster of the achievement of the man about whom Harrison says (p. 105): "In 1959, Sir James Pitman invented the Augmented Roman Alphabet." Harrison properly dubs it (Preface, p. V) "Pitman's Initial Teaching Alphabet."

But our purpose today is to review the story of one representative in that long line of spelling reformers, who exerted great influence on Sir James Pitman in his "invention" and development of i.t.a. – George Bernard Shaw.

Sir James Pitman wrote the Foreword to a book by the present speaker, *George Bernard Shaw on Language.* [3] In it, he tells of a visit he made to G.B.S. on Aug. 5, 1947 which changed the course of history, in a sense; at least, it changed Sir James' basic outlook.

In the Foreword, Sir James Pitman pays tribute to the keenness of vision with which people like his grandfather, Sir Isaac Pitman, and George Bernard Shaw saw only too clearly, "the legacy of inefficiency in the communication of the English language by print and handwriting which the Romans have, with no evil intentions, foisted upon us." In other words, they were spelling

reformers who bewailed the absurdities and inconsistencies of English spelling, and sought logical and rational solutions to the problem.

G.B.S., continues Sir James, "recalled my grandfather's fate, described his own, and discussed the future of his own famous will, which was to be literally his dying effort to persuade others to see this long-standing problem clearly."

Sir James goes on to point out additional features of the way the language is written which are responsible for its difficulties and unphonetic nature, i.e., the use of an alphabet system devised for Latin and then applied to their "non-romanic language" by the Anglo-Saxon s-and weakened further in the Renaissance loss of two characters appropriately designed for it.

Sir James tells of his visit on 5th August, 1947 in the company of the famous British phonetician, Prof. Daniel Jones, to Ayot St. Lawrence, the home of Bernard Shaw. Sir James tells of their mission – "to persuade the great G.B.S. to leave his money" to the Simplified Spelling Society, of which Sir James was (and is) Treasurer, Prof. Daniel Jones was Chairman, and Sir Gilbert Murray, another world famous scholar, was President. In the Simplified Spelling Society, says Sir James, "We had long worked together... to perfect an alternative spelling (i.e. alphabet system) – but one using the familiar Roman characters, 23 of them, and 17 digraphs made up of combinations of those characters, viz: th, dh, ch, sh, zh, ng, ae, ee, ie, oe, ue, aa, au, oo, uu, ou, oi."

The two visitors to G.B.S. on that fateful afternoon "hoped that the S.S.S. would thus be accepted by him as the 'chosen instrument' which his printed circular of 1944 was inviting to take up his money."

Sir James goes on to describe with great charm the visit to the great man:

> "The iron gate of Shaw's Corner was open, and we were made by the great man to sense that we were most welcome and important visitors. If we could not see clearly (as we ought to be able to see) we could see clearly at least in part. Even if our failure to see that all efforts at improvement in written communication based on acceptance of the Roman alphabet must be foredoomed to failure, at least there was hope: after all, the fact that we see through a glass darkly showed that he might be able to make us see clearly.
>
> "The tea was beautifully served by a parlour maid. The quality of the service and of the food was that of Buckingham Palace on all occasions, and that of the middle class villa on occasions of great importance. His attentiveness to our needs and the charm of his manner have been a memory ever since.
>
> "So too, was the devastating argument and his determined obstinacy! His eyes and beard, his knockerbocker suit, his refusal to join us even in a cup of tea, and his whole presence made defeat, and certainty that there never would be even hope of success, a stimulating and indeed exciting experience.
>
> "It must have been the case that those who visited Shaw for a purpose – one might say to ride on the tiger – came away eaten up by the strength of his argument, but with at any rate a replica of that charming smile which had been on the face of the tiger.
>
> "I certainly came away elated in my defeat, smiling happily in the knowledge that we were both right – and that I would forever after be so much stronger in the greater clarity which I had gained, and above all, in seeing clearly how two concepts, hitherto apparently conflicting, were indeed complementary – that our Society's ideas for improving romanic alphabeticism

> remained even sounder than ever, having withstood his devastating dissection. It was obvious that while he remained adamant on the soundness of his own approach, he had been in that limited respect won over, having turned contemptuous dismissal (however politely phrased) into a mutual respect. We made it obvious that, for our part, we too, were adamant and we, too, in a correction of our misconceptions, listened with excitement to his even grander design, and accepted the soundness of his reasoning."

And now comes the nub of the matter. For Sir James says, with great cogency and impact: "But from that moment my own approach to the objects of our Society was reoriented. My desire to improve our alphabeticism, using the Roman alphabet, was shifted from an intended benefit to the adult literate for continuing use, to a benefit intended rather for the young native child (or older foreigner), beginning to learn (or to read and speak)."

Thus, Sir James seems to say that his visit to G.B.S. in 1947 revealed to him the insights which culminated in the invention and development of i.t.a. in 1959, "to a benefit intended rather for the young native child (or older foreigner) *beginning to learn to read (or to read and speak*)...."

Considering, then, G.B.S.' great influence on Sir James Pitman, perhaps a brief review of George Bernard Shaw's ideas on related subjects may be of some use and pertinence to students and practitioners of i.t.a. Indeed, this is the substance of the anthology of Shaw's writings edited by Tauber. **[3]** This, then, must of necessity, be a brief survey.

Shaw's interest in the English language qua language spanned over half a century of active writing, from 1876 to 1950 – and included novels, prefaces to plays and books, plays, brochures, essays, broadsides, letters to editors, and the famous post-cards... Rather than diminishing over the years, his involvement intensified, culminating in his famous Will. In this, he chose to leave the income of the bulk of his estate "to institute and finance a series of inquiries" to investigate a new "Proposed British Alphabet" (cf. i.t.a.). It was this Will, incidentally, which was defended by Sir James Pitman in the British courts so that at least part of Shaw's intention was realized.

Shaw's basic purpose was to reduce the costs of printing, because he believed a new alphabet would prove more economical. It was only late in life (in 1944, when he was 88) that Shaw – in announcing that he was making his Will, and seeking a person or persons to carry it out, said: "1 must repeat with all possible emphasis that the scheme is purely economic. Its object is to save time and labour, whether in producing books and newspapers or teaching children to read, write and speak."

Shaw's earliest interest in language was as an amateur philologist, in connection with which he studied phonetics, thru Lecky, Alexander Ellis and Henry Sweet, the prototype for Henry Higgins of "Pygmalion" and "My Fair Lady." In his earliest novels, and later in plays, he was challenged by the desire to record the dialect of a character – as in the novel, *Immaturity* in 1879, and later in "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," and of course, in "Pygmalion."

In his "Notes" to "Captain Brassbound's Conversion," G.B.S. wrote an essay on "English and American Dialects" which reflected his sophisticated scholarship and point of view. Similarly, the "Preface" to "Pygmalion: A Professor of Phonetics" rivals the play – even the revised 1942 version, based on the 1938 movie, for which Shaw wrote the scenario-in its sound understanding of the problems and processes of language learning.

Shaw engaged in a constant series of polemics with proponents of moderate spelling reform proposals, moving from a "phonetic spelling" point of view to his later abandonment of the use of

the Roman alphabet, which he characterized as an "old Semitic one," and his espousal of "alphabet reform" rather than "spelling 'reform."

But it was Sir James Pitman's persistence and realism that rescued the germ of the G.B.S. idea from being lost, winnowing the wheat from the chaff. He utilized the economic lever, not as Shaw intended, to save money in printing, but to save human resources in the educational time and energy devoted to teaching children to read. In i.t.a. is incorporated the essential idea that Shaw had popularized – of English as a beautiful, easily spoken language badly recorded in writing, and hence difficult to learn and teach. Sir James Pitman has managed by application of the principles of phonetics and of resolution, wit and concentrated effort, to bring to realization in i.t.a. at least part of the Shavian dream in a way that the "great man" never anticipated but would surely have appreciated.

References

1. Dewey, Godfrey. i.t.a. – Child and Parent of Spelling Reform. *Proceedings* of the Fourth Annual International Conference on the Initial Teaching Alphabet, 1967.
2. Harrison, Maurice. *Instant Reading: The Story of the Initial Teaching Alphabet.* London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1964.
3. Tauber, Abraham. *George Bernard Shaw on Language.* New York, Philosophical Library, 1963.
4. Tauber, Abraham. *Spelling Reform in the United States.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Columbia University, 1958.
5. Tauber, Abraham. *Better English Thru Simplified Spelling: A History of Spelling Reform. New York,* 1969.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 p10 in the printed version]

Dear Newell: July 10, 1968

The United Kingdom Reading Assoc. (UKRA) is in a critical growing stage, especially in its development of publications. I believe that the several books related to UKRA and its regular journal, *Reading,* are all of high quality and deserve to be better known in America. It would greatly help UKRA and benefit American Educators if they would read these publications. All the royalties on the books go directly to the UKRA.

1. *The First International Reading Symposium.* Editor: John Downing Pub. London: Cassell. New York: John Day, 1966. $5.95 (in U.S.A.)
2. *The 2nd Intern. Reading Sym.* Ed. John Downing & Amy L. Brown. London: Cassell, 1967. $5.25 postpaid.
3. *The 3rd Intern. Reading Sym.* Ed. John Downing & Amy L. Brown. London: Cassell, 1968, $5.20 postpaid.
4. *Reading: Current Research & Practice, v. 1.* Ed. Amy L. Brown. Edinburgh: Chambers, 1967. $1.75 postpaid.
5. *Reading* (UKRA's journal) $2.25 annual subsc. from Mr. K. W. Birks, Stockport, Cheshire, Eng.

Yours sincerely, John Downing.

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp11–17 in the printed version]

6. Phonics in Proper Perspective, by Arthur W. Heilman, Ph.D.*

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The purpose of this article is to provide both the experienced and the prospective teacher with materials which might lead to a better understanding of:

- the purpose and limitations of phonics instruction as it relates to teaching reading
- concrete practices which may be followed in teaching the various "steps" in phonic analysis
- the rationale which underlies particular instructional practices.

The material herein reflects several premises:

1. Teaching phonics is an important part of teaching reading.
2. Teachers should be knowledgable about the purpose of phonic instruction as it relates to reading (what to teach) and about the rationale or justification for the practices they follow.
3. There are a number of psychologically sound principles which should be followed in phonics instruction.
4. In recent years, there has been no legitimate basis for a debate on phonetic methods vs. sight-word methods, as these terms actually have no identifiable referents.
5. The spurious debate on the above polar positions has tended to obscure real educational issues such as:
   a) the proper concentration on analysis that is desirable for the beginning reading period,
   b) the desirability of teaching rules or generalizations which have very limited applications,
   c) the logical order in which the "steps" in phonics instruction should be introduced.

As teachers, we need to be well informed about both what to teach and why we teach as we do. Otherwise, methodology may become separated from logical principles of learning. In recent years, this has actually happened in much of the discussion of phonics as well as in practices advocated by certain critics of present day reading instruction.

The purpose and limitations of phonics instruction

The purpose of phonics instruction, as it relates to reading, is to provide the reader with the ability to pronounce or to approximate the pronunciation of any word he meets in reading, which HE DOES NOT KNOW AS A SIGHT WORD. This is ample reason for teaching phonics and sufficient justification for teaching it well. The application of phonic analysis in reading situations is simply utilizing one important reading skill. Phonics does not constitute a total method for teaching the complicated process called reading. To keep the teaching of phonics in proper perspective, one must: (1) see phonic analysis as an important reading skill; (2) realize that phonics is only one of a number of ways a child may "solve" words not known as sight words.

In recent years, noticeable confusion has accompanied discussion of reading because the meaning of some of the terms used in that discussion were vague or misleading. Certain critics of reading instruction tried to establish the existence of a dichotomy in which reading instruction was attempted by means of teaching exclusively either "sight words" or phonics. Linguists have rightly pointed out that the terms "phonics" and "phonetics" are often used interchangably despite the fact that these terms have quite different meanings. In an effort to militate against further confusion, a few brief definitions of basic terms are presented here:

l. *Phonics* – A facet of reading instruction teaching speech sounds of letters and groups of letters in words.

2. *Phonic* analysis – The process of sounding letters or letter combinations to arrive at the pronunciation of words.

3. *Phonetics* – That segment of linguistic science which deals with speech sounds, how these sounds are made vocally, sound changes which develop in languages, and the relation of speech sounds to the total language process. All phonics instruction is derived from phonetics, but phonics (as it relates to reading) utilizes only a relatively small portion of the body of knowledge identified as phonetics.

4. *Word Analysis* – An inclusive term which includes all methods of recognizing words which are not known as sight words.

5. *Sight-word method – The* term "sight-word method" is an abstraction which does not adequately describe present-day reading instruction. However, most beginning instruction involves the teaching of a limited number of sight words before phonic analysis is introduced. The term came into common usage because it does describe this first and important step. Gradually, "sight-word method" was used to imply the existence of an instructional approach which proscribed phonics and advocated teaching every new word by sight only.

6. *Phonetic method* – Since there is no exclusive phonic method of teaching reading, this term sometimes functions as either an abstraction or overstatement. For example, if "phonetic method" simply means that phonic analysis is employed, all methods of teaching reading would qualify as phonetic methods. On the other hand, if "phonetic method" implies teaching reading by means of exclusive reliance on phonic analysis, all presently acceptable definitions of "reading" would have to be discarded. "Word analysis" could be substituted for "reading" and children could be punished each time a word was learned as a sight word. Also, English word spelling would have to be revised completely along phonetic principles. This has been suggested in some quarters; but, while this has certain merits, no wholesale revision has yet been accepted. [**]

7. Phonetic method vs. sight-word method – These terms are often used to suggest that there presently exist two antithetical approaches to teaching reading. In reality, no such dichotomy exists and teachers of reading should not use these terms in this sense. Nor should critics who use them in this sense go unchallenged.

Word-analysis skills

Seeing phonics in proper perspective involves: (1) understanding that phonic analysis is one of several means by which children can "solve" words not known as sight words; (2) noting that phonics relates to, and interacts with, all of the other methods of word analysis such as:

1. *Word form* – In general, all words can be said to be just as unique in appearance as they are in their sound. Yet, in the experience of a primary-level child, the visual forms of words are so much alike that much practice is needed to perceive the minute differences between them. While learning to discriminate word forms, the child might note such limited factors as the *length* of words, or special features such as *tt, ll, oo* or final *y*. Learning to recognize the word *monkey* because it has a tail (y) at the end may serve an immediate and limited purpose; but soon the child will meet *money, merry*, *funny* and *penny.* The word look may be learned as having two eyes in the middle; but soon the child meets *book, room*, *stood, flood.* It is obvious that, as the child expands his reading, these "unique" features become common to a large number of words and it becomes necessary to note every letter detail of words.

2. *Structional analysis* – Here, the child may note structural changes which differentiate between words having common roots. Such changes include:

a) the addition of inflectional endings (-s, -ed, -ing)

b) modifications resulting when prefixes or suffixes have been added to known roots (pre-, un-, dis-; -tive, -tion, -ment)

c) combining two words to form compounds (anyone, someplace, sidewalk).

3. *Context clues* – When a child is reading for meaning, the context in which an unknown word is met is useful in suggesting what the word might be. Usually, only a few words could possibly fill out the meaning. For example:

"The boy threw the ball to his s- – - – -."

There are probably not more than a half-dozen words which could be inserted in the blank space (friend, sister, mother, playmate, brother, father). Some possibilities would be less logical than others *depending* on what has *happened in the story prior to this sentence.*

In addition, it must be kept in mind that the child is not taught to rely exclusively on context. He has been taught to look at the initial letter, the first syllable, (and more if needed) in unknown words. As he solves the initial sound in the word, all or most of the otherwise logical possibilities are eliminated. Returning to our example,

"The boy threw the ball to his s- – - – -." sis- – -."

A number of devices are utilized by authors to provide context clues which help readers solve new words and difficult concepts. One of these is to incorporate a description-definition in the text.

"They were now traveling through _____ country. It was very hot, there was sand underfoot and the wind blew sand in their eyes. There were no streams – no water whatsoever – and no shade trees. The d_____ extended as far as the eye could see."

Other techniques include comparison or contrast, and the use of synonyms or antonyms.

"At this point the stream flowed very – - – - – - – [rapidly]. The water splashed over the rocks and sent up white spray as it moved *swiftly* through the pass."

Solving the pronunciation of an unknown word is facilitated by:

a) the meaning of the total sentence in which the word occurs,

b) what has occurred in previously read sentences and sentences which follow-assuming, of course, that the child is "reading for meaning."

4. Picture clues – In beginning reading, pictures provide clues to many unknown words (turkey, father, wagon). Pictures are used both to indicate or represent words and to expand concepts. The fact that some children learn to become too dependent on pictures is not a good argument against the use of pictures. Pictures help focus attention on meaning; they lead one into a story, and where only a limited number of words are known, pictures supplement.

5. Phonic analysis – The English alphabet contains 26 letters which need to represent about *45* speech sounds. The difficulty of learning to read English is compounded by this fact: that many letters and letter combinations represent a number of different sounds. Despite this lack of consistency in written English, a person learning to read must associate printed symbols with "characteristic speech sounds." The teaching of letter sounds is referred to as "phonics instruction." The various steps in teaching phonics are listed at the end of this chapter and discussed in detail in later chapters.

Skills in combination

It should be noted that structural and phonic analysis constantly interact. Such pre-fabricated units as *ex-, pre-, dis-, en-, pro-, -ed, -ing, -tive, -ment, -tion,* and the like, when added to words, do produce structural changes. But each of these, and many more, are also phonic units. The pronunciation of prefixes, suffixes and compound words remains quite consistent.

Structural changes in a word will often camouflage clues which the reader may have used in recognizing the root. When a child does not instantly recognize such a new word, he should resort to sounding. For example, a child may know the word *locate*, but not recognize *dislocated,* or *relocating*. Sounding the "parts" will unlock the pronunciation and, since the meaning of the root word is known, the meaning of the new word is grasped.

The above approaches to word analysis are probably not of equal value in learning to read.

Different children may learn to rely on one method more than on others; and some approaches, such as unique form, have limited utility beyond the early stages of learning to read. Facile reading would not result if one went through a series of trial-and-error responses in which only one of the above approaches to word analysis was used. Efficient readers use various methods of word attack simultaneously.

As an example, assume a child is reading the following sentence in which the blank represents an unknown word:

A. "Look, look," said Jack, "look at the --__- ,

The content of example A alone does not provide enough context clues for the reader to solve the unknown word. In B, the sentence is shown in a larger context.

B. "I hear a car," said Jack.
"I do not hear a car," said Suzy. "I hear a funny noise."
"I hear a honk-honk," said Jack, "but I do not see a car."
"That noise is in the sky," said Suzy.
Jack pointed at the sky. "Look, look," said Jack. "Look at the g------."
Suzy said, "They are flying south for the winter."

At this point, the background and previous experience of some readers will suggest the unknown word. The context suggests several classes of subjects, such as birds or airplanes, which would be logical. However, in the child's book, the "unknown" is not a blank space – it is a word composed of letters. The sounds which these letters represent have been studied. Even tho the word is not known, the child who has been properly taught will note the initial consonant *g*. He will not say "bird" or "airplane" or any other word which does not begin with the g sound. He will "sound" as much as he needs:

"Look at the g- – - – ."
gee- -. geese."

This story, since it is at the primary level, is accompanied by a picture which shows both children looking up – Jack pointing – toward the sky to a V formation of geese. Thus, context, previous experience, a picture, sounding the initial consonant, then the double vowel – if needed – all provide clues which will help the reader solve the unknown word without a noticeable hesitation. The less facile reader might require a pause in his reading while he "sounds out" the word. Only a very inefficient reader would depend entirely on "sounding." This would involve wasting all of the other clues – and brings us to our next point.

Overreliance on sounding is not efficient

This discussion of phonics in proper perspective rests on these premises:

1. A reader is handicapped when he has not mastered the sounding techniques he needs to solve words not recognized as sight words.

2. The reader is handicapped if he relies *too heavily* on phonic analysis WHEN OTHER MODES OF ATTACK WOULD BE MORE ECONOMICAL. If a child CAN sound every word in a story and DOES sound every word, he is, in all probability, an inefficient reader. Each interruption of the reading process by *phonic analysis of a word* detracts from smooth, fluent reading.

3. Early reading instruction can be structured so as to inculcate any one of a number of "sets." A child may overlearn the habit of sounding. He may still be analyzing words long after he should have mastered them as sight words. That is, he may be sounding words the tenth, twentieth or fiftieth time he meets them. Since the objective of reading instruction is not to produce this kind of reader, every effort should be made to see that the child does not generalize that "sounding out words is reading."

4. Efficient reading involves developing the ability to analyze or sound unknown words, but at the same time holding reliance on such analysis to an absolute minimum.

Variability of letter sounds in English

One factor which limits the efficacy of phonic analysis in learning to read English is the fact that the pronunciation of English words follows too many inconsistent patterns. This is partly due to English absorbing so many words from various foreign sources and partly due to the Great Pronunciation Shift that took place between the time of William the Conqueror and William Shakespeare. So now, tho English is an alphabetic language in its written form, it is also one of the least phonetically lawful. That is, there is nothing like a one-to-one relationship between letter spellings and letter sounds in English. Some of the reasons which account in part for this fact are:

1. Many words have come into English from other languages, such as Latin, Greek, French, German, etc. (alias, waive, corps, debris, alien, buoy, feint, boquet, etc.).
2. A given letter, or letters, may have many different sounds in different words (co*w* [au]; lo*w* [o]; c*a*n [a]; c*a*ne [a]; *c*ap [k]; *c*ity [s]; bu*s* [s]; hi*s* [z]; mea*s*ure [zh]).
3. In thousands of English words, a letter or letters may have no sound (~~k~~no~~w~~, ki~~c~~k, lis~~t~~en, li~~gh~~t, plum~~b~~, ~~w~~ring).

The following examples illustrate some of the variability found in English wards. Some words are:

pronounced the same,
spelled differently,
and each is phonetically "lawful"

sail-sale; meat-meet; heal-heel; maid-made

In these examples, the generalization which applies to both spellings is:

When there are two vowels in a word, usually the first is long and the second is silent.

In the following list, the top word of each pair is governed by the above phonic generalization – the lower is not.

ate	rain	peace	wait
eight	reign	piece	weight

A word may have one or more *silent letters* which differentiates it from another word which is pronounced exactly the same:

rap	our	no	night	plum
wrap	hour	know	knight	plumb

Some words are spelled exactly the same but have different origins, meanings, and pronunciations:

"Your mother will *object* if you keep this *object* in your room."

"The author was *content* with the *content* of his story."

The long sounds of vowels may be "made" by any of these and other letter combinations in words:

day	they	fate	sail	reign	great	
ā=ay	ey	a (e)	ai	ei	ea	
feet	meat	deceive	brief	ski	key	
ē=ee	ea	ei	ie	i	ey	
my	kite	pie	height	buy	guide	
ī=y	i (e)	ie	ei	uy	ui	
show	hold	boat	note	go	door	four
ō=ow	o(+ld)	oa	o (e)	o	oo	ou
flew	view	tube	due	suit	you	
ū=ew	iew	u (e)	ue	ui	you	

It should be evident from the above that it would not be easy to write a series of rules to cover all the sounds that letters make in the English language. In fact, there *is no phonic rule* which will apply to all words which meet the criteria the rule sets forth. Therefore, any phonic rule may have to be "amended" many times to cover the situations the original rule was designed to cover. As an example, let us look at the most widely applicable rule relating to vowel sounds:

A single vowel in medial position, in a word or syllable usually has its short sound.

This generalization is quite useful to children learning to read. Studies of the frequency with which it applies to words met in primary reading support the view that should be taught. [l] However, it should also be pointed out that there are a great number of instances in which the generalization does not hold. The following are exceptions followed by generalizations which have emerged to cover these situations:

Exception A: hold, cold, bold, gold, bolt, colt.
New rule: The single vowel *o*, followed by *ld* or *lt*, has its long sound.
Exception B: car, fir, fur, her, bird, hurt, perch, corn, part.
New rule: A vowel followed by r has neither its long nor short sound – the vowel sound is modified by the r.
Exception C: wild, mild, child; find, mind, blind.
New rule: The vowel *i* before *ld* or *nd is* usually long.
Exception D: ball, call, fall; halt, malt, salt, etc.
New rule: The vowel *a* followed by *ll* or *lt,* has a pronunciation like *aw* (ball=bawl).

Exception E: high, sigh; light, night, bright, flight, etc.
New rule: The vowel *i* in *igh* or *ight* words is usually long.
Other exceptions: sign=(ī); was=(uz); both=(ō); front=(u).

These illustrations have dealt only with monosyllabic words containing a single vowel in medial position. The "exceptions" to the basic rule are only the major ones which might logically be dealt with in teaching reading, and the words listed here represent only a small fraction of those that could be cited.

The point of this discussion is not to attempt to refute the premise stated earlier that "there is ample reason for teaching phonics – and teaching it well," but rather to suggest that phonics has its limitations when applied to learning to read English. In a number of different sources, one might read that 85% of English words are phonetic. It is not clear what this statement means; but it probably was meant to imply the possibility of formulating enough phonic rules to cover approximately this percentage of English words. As rules become more involved and cover fewer and fewer actual words, one may question the relationship between learning these rules and learning the process called "reading."

The discussion of the purpose and limitations of phonics in reading instruction is summarized with a restatement of these premises:

1. Phonic analysis is taught in order that children may pronounce words they do not recognize as sight words.
2. This skill is needed if children are to become independent readers – thus, teaching phonics is an important facet of teaching reading.
3. Phonics is only one method of *word analysis.* Facile readers use many methods, often in combination.
4. Despite the values in teaching and learning phonic analysis, too much reliance on phonic analysis inhibits facile reading.
5. The nature of the English language imposes limitations on the degree to which formal instruction in phonic analysis can aid the beginning reader.

Educational issues in teaching phonics

Most of the individuals engaged in the on-going debate on teaching reading would probably not take exception to the points listed above; however, one corps of critics of present reading instruction has been able to focus the attention of the public on a spurious issue – *phonetic method* vs. *sight-word method*. The idea has been planted that the term "sight-word method" actually describes present methodology; that in this method, all words introduced at various instructional levels are taught as sight words; and that phonics is neither advocated nor used in reading instruction. None of this fits the facts. However, if one starts from the premise that this idea is factual, the real methodological issues related to phonics instruction are neatly covered up. A few of the educational issues which merit the attention of teachers are:

1. Should beginning reading instruction start with teaching whole words as units – or with teaching the sounds letters make in words?
2. How much phonics should be included in begining reading; i.e., in grade one?
3. In what sequence or order should the steps in phonics be taught?

The rationale for teaching whole words first

A child entering school has had much experience in *hearing* and in *speaking* or using language. He has learned oral language in units of words – he has associated meaning with whole words and with words used in combination. Some linguists stress that language is oral and that the language usage

of the preschool child implies the ability to discriminate the letter sounds heard in words. This is much too facile a generalization to apply to a five- or six-year-old's meaningful use of oral language. The child has not mastered the sophisticated knowledge of speech sounds that the linguist's statement implies. To the child, the spoken equivalent of cat is a unitary or global sound which he can differentiate globally from all other language units called words.

Beginning reading involves associating unknown printed word symbols with the known oral language or speech equivalent of *words.* There is, or should be, a one-to-one relationship between the pronunciation of words and the printed word symbol. The oral statement, "The eight knights knew night would come," is depicted in conventional print as it is in the quotes. Phonetically this would be written:

"The āt nītz nū nīt wúd kŭm."

Here there is no discrimination between words sounded alike, yet the meaning is unambiguous. The following points are those frequently cited as justification for teaching whole words as units prior to teaching phonic analysis of letter sounds:

1. The child's knowledge of, and use of, oral language involves the meaningful use of words and of words in combination. We wish the learner to move one short step from what is known-to what is to be learned. Learning printed whole words is a logical *first step* in the reading process.

2. Spoken language and printed word symbols maintain a one-to-one relationship, *regardless of the gross irregularities found in English*. That is to say – except for homographs, a word is always pronounced the same. However the sounds contributed by individual letters in printed words vary tremendously.

3. Reading is a more meaningful process when the child deals with words as units, rather than with letter sounds. Meaning resides in the total word and in the special ways words are used together-not in the sound of the individual letter-parts of words.

4. If a child knows a number of words as sight words, he can more easily be taught to *see* and *hear* similarities between the known words and new words he meets.

5. As the first step in beginning reading, it is easier to learn a number of sight words than to learn a set of complicated rules for sounding out letters in words.

6. Many words met in beginning reading do not lend themselves to phonic analysis because of our malphonetic spelling. These need to be learned as sight words.

7. The objective of reading instruction is not to have the child analyze each word. However, if in beginning instruction he is taught to analyze each word, this habit will be acquired.

8. Learning whole words teaches children to look at the whole word from left to right, as opposed to some phonic systems which advocate teaching vowel sounds first. In a vast majority of words, this mode of attack will start the analysis in the middle of words, rather than at the beginning of the word.

Amount of phonics taught in beginning reading instruction

This is one of the most important issues related to phonics instruction. All methods and materials used in present-day reading instruction advocate teaching much the same program of phonics during the primary years. However, there are important differences as to how this phonics instruction is spaced throughout this period. One approach, which might be labled "early emphasis

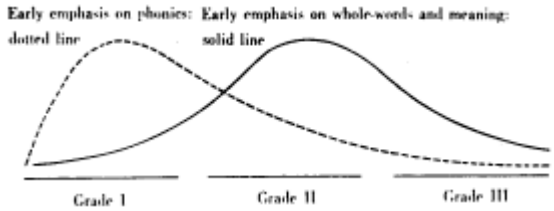
on phonic instruction," advocates using the first eight weeks of formal reading instruction for teaching letter sounds, both vowels and consonants. Furthermore, the grade one program is highly saturated with analysis-at least 80% of the entire phonics program being introduced in grade 1.

A quite different point of view holds that the child's first experiences with reading should be meaningful and deal with words rather than letter sounds. The grade one program ofphonic analysis teaches all consonant sounds, consonant blends, some inflectional endings, and some compounds. The major differences in philosophy and practice in these two instructional approaches are outlined below:

Early emphasis on phonic analysis
A. Teach sounds of letters before child learns words.
B. Teach phonic analysis from beginning of reading instruction; considerable emphasis in early stages of instruction.
C. Introduce most (70-85%) of phonic rules on principles in grade one.
D. Introduction of total phonics program is completed in grade 2. Reviewed thruout grades two and three.

Early emphasis on reading for meaning
A. Teach some words as sight words – then analyze speed sounds heard in these known words.
B. Learn words as wholes. Read words in sentences no emphasis on "analysis" in early stages of instructions.
C. Teach much smaller % of rules or principles in grade 1.
D. Total phonic program is taught over time period of grades one, two and three.

Figure 1
Area under curves represents number of phonic principles or rules introduced at various grade levels. (Does not refer to amount of classroom time devoted to instruction.)



The order in which phonic skills are taught
The third issue is the sequence in which the various steps in the phonics program should be introduced and taught. This is not an important problem in certain contexts such as: In what order should consonant sounds be taught; should all long vowel sounds be taught before short vowel sounds (or vice versa); which consonant blends should be taught first?

However, the question of whether to introduce the teaching of phonics by teaching consonant sounds first or vowel sounds first is worthy of some discussion. There is little doubt that children can learn these skills in either order. The questions which teachers should answer are:

1. What are the data related to this issue of the proper sequence for teaching the various steps in phonics?

2. Are the procedures which I follow supported by sound learning theory?
The following discussion examines a number of the justifications commonly advanced by proponents of reaching consonant sounds first and by those who support teaching vowel sounds first.

Rationale for Teaching Consonant Sounds First

1. The majority of words children meet in beginning reading are words which begin with consonants. For instance, 175 (or approximately 80%) of the 220 words on the Dolch Basic Sight Word Test (published by Garrard Press, Champaign, Illinois) begin with consonants. The Dale List of 769 Easy Words (Edgar Dale, "A Comparison of Two Word Lists," *Educational Research Bulletin,* Dec. 9, 1931, p. 484-89), contains even a higher proportion (87%) of words beginning with consonants.

2. It is good learning theory to have the child start phonic analysis with the beginning of words, working his way through the words from left to right. This reinforces the practice of reading from left to right and focuses the child's attention on the first part of the word. This is essential for facile reading, and an absolute prerequisite if he is to *solve* the word by "sounding."

3. Consonants tend to be much more consistent than vowels in sound representation. For instance, eleven consonants (j, k, l, m, n, p, b, h, r, v, w) usually have only one sound each (when not silent). Certain other consonants which have two sounds present no problem in BEGINING reading instruction because one of the basic sounds can be left until the child has had some considerable practice in reading. Examples:

c=k in cat, cake, color, cup, cap, cut, could, can, cold, cry, call, clean, cage
c=s when *c* is followed by *e, i,* or *y* (cent, century, ceiling, cypress, celebrate, citizen, cycle, cease)
d has d sound in did, doll, don't, day, do, dog, dish
d has j sound in individual, graduate, cordial, educate

Rationale for Teaching Vowel Sounds First

1. Beginning readers can learn vowel sounds easily because they can be pronounced alone. The more quickly they learn them, the more quickly they will become independent readers. (It will be noted that this statement is equally valid when applied to consonants.)

2. Beginning phonic analysis with vowel sounds, it is stated, is justifiable because vowels carry more of a clue to the word's pronunciation than do consonants. This theory is often questioned on the basis that it is simply not supported by the evidence. [2] Assume the following blank space represents a missing vowel: 1-ck. There are only four possibilities-lack, lick, lock, luck. Insert each of these vowels, but leave the initial consonant blank and a much larger number of possibilities results:

-ack	-ick	-ock	-uck
back	Dick	cock	buck
hack	kick	dock	duck
Jack	hick	lock	puck
lack	lick	mock	luck
Mack	pick	rock	muck
pack	sick	sock	puck
rack	tick	tock	suck
sack	wick		tuck

The same holds for double vowels:

-eed can be deed, feed, heed, need, reed, seed, weed
-eat can be beat, feat, heat, meat, neat, peat, seat
-ail can be bail, fail, hail, mail, nail, pail, rail, tail, sail

3. Vowels should be taught first because all words (and syllables) contain vowels. If the words *a, I,* and *eye* are eliminated, one may demonstrate that all words also contain consonants. How the fact that all words contain vowels is a justification for teaching vowel sounds first has not been explained in any material which has come to the writer's attention.

In conclusion, it would appear that certain facts – (1) most consonants are consistent in their sound; (2) the vast majority of words begin with consonants; (3) children should learn to read English from left to right and analyze words left to right – offer a substantial basis for teaching consonants first.

Principles to apply in teaching phonics

The systematic study of any teaching-learning situation may be expected to yield a set of psychologically sound principles which relate to and govern teaching procedures. In teaching, one would follow sound principles in order to enhance learning. Principles do not spell out precise practices to be followed, but rather provide a set of guidelines by which to measure classroom instructional practices. The following principles for teaching *phonic analy*sis are advanced for teachers' consideration. If these principles are found to be educationally sound, they merit application in the classroom.

1. *For any child to profit from systematic instruction in phonics, he must have the ability to discriminate between similar speech sounds. To* attempt to teach numerous phonic generalizations in the absence of auditory discrimination equal to the learning task is not only inadvisable from the standpoint of learning, but is often detrimental to the learner.

2. *Auditory and visual training should be blended and taught simultaneously.* Phonics (as it relates to reading) is teaching speech-sound equivalents for printed letters and letter combinations. Thus, a child must be able to recognize instantly and discriminate visually between printed letter symbols before instruction in phonics can have any relation to reading printed symbols. For example, a child who can differentiate between the sounds of *bee* and *dee,* but cannot visually discriminate between the printed symbols *b* and *d* cannot apply phonics in a reading situation which involves words containing these symbols.

3. *Any instructional practice which produces a learning set, which in itself inhibits the development of reading for meaning, merits reappraisal.* If reading is "getting meaning," children should not be conditioned in beginning reading instruction to equate reading with "sounding" or "word analysis." Practices followed in beginning reading instruction *do* inculcate a "set" in the learner. In the golden age of phonics, many children *did* develop the set that pronouncing words was reading. Sounding out words is a needed skill, but the facile reader will apply it only when necessary; and the less analysis that is needed in a given reading situation, the more efficient and meaningful will be the reading. A third grade child who *can* sound every word and *does* sound every word on the page is an impaired reader. Since we do not wish to produce this type of reader, we should assiduously avoid practices which lead to this type of development.

4. *All phonic facts and generalizations necessary for a child to become an independent reader should be taught.*

5. *For a child to learn to read, it is not necessary for him to learn phonic generalizations which have extremely limited application.* A teacher accepting this principle would still have to arrive at a conclusion as to what rules actually fit under this classification. Individual teachers may resolve this problem by answering questions such as the following in regard to each phonic generalization they propose to teach:

a) What contributions will this generalization make in the "learning-to-read process?"
b) Does this generalization apply to enough words which the child will meet in his current reading program to justify my teaching it *now?*

6. *Instructional practice which leads to overreliance on one method of word attack is indefensible.* In any reading situation, words appear in context; many words have prefabricated sound-sight units such as prefixes, suffixes, inflectional endings, and roots combined in compounds. To teach reliance on context clues alone would be inadequate, and to rely on "sounding" while ignoring all other clues, would be equally indefensible. It is wasteful not to attack an unknown word simultaneously on every possible front.

7. *All elementary teachers should be familiar with the entire phonics program.* All teachers of reading, regardless of grade level, will probably find it necessary to teach, review, or reteach certain phonic skills to some children in their classrooms. Thus, familiarity with all steps in phonics instruction is essential.

8. *A thoro and on-going diagnosis of each child's needs and present knowledge is a prerequisit for following sound principles of teaching phonics skills.* It is not desirable to teach more phonics than a given child needs, or to omit teaching needed skills not yet mastered. *Diagnosis is the key to achieving this proper balance.*

9. *Knowledge of phonic generalizations (rules) does not assure ability to apply these generalizations in reading situations.* Both in teaching and learning, the process of "sounding out words" must be differentiated from learning rules. Some children can recite a given rule and yet have no ability to apply or practice what it tells them to do. On the other hand, knowledge of phonic generalizations is useful to children. In general, materials should be presented in such a way that the application of a given generalization evolves out of actual word study. At best, phonic generalizations are a crutch which may have utility at certain points on the learning continuum. A reader who is continually groping for a rule to apply when he meets a word not known as a sight word is not a facile reader.

Steps in Teaching Phonics

The outline below lists the steps in the order in which they are discussed in the following chapters.

1. Auditory-visual discrimination
2. Teaching consonant sounds
    a) Initial consonants
    b) Consonant digraphs (sh, wh, th, ch)
    c) Consonant blends (br, cl, str, etc.)
    d) Substituting initial consonant sounds
    e) Sounding consonants at end of words
    f) Consonant digraphs (nk, ng, ck, qu)
    g) Consonant irregularities
    h) Silent consonants
    i) Sight-word list-non-phonetic spellings
    j) Contractions
3. Teaching vowel sounds
    a) Short vowel sounds
    b) Long vowel sounds
    c) Teaching long and short sounds together
    d) Exceptions to vowel rules taught
    e) Diphthongs
    f) Sounds of oo and oo

4. Syllabification
    a) Rules
    b) Prefixes and suffixes
    c) Compound words
    d) Doubling final consonants
    e) Accent

These steps in phonic analysis represent a series of instructional tasks which merit inclusion in reading instruction. It is suggested that these steps be taught in the order in which they are presented. This is believed to be a logical sequence, but it is not implied that this is the only defensible sequence.

It will be noted that the steps listed are only a bare outline of major facets of instruction. For instance, teaching consonant sounds is one step, but it involves at least two dozen separate teachings (since some consonants have more than one sound). Teaching consonant digraphs and blends would include another 30 separate tasks. All steps must be reviewed and retaught as needed. Diagnosis of individual pupils' progress will determine when, and how much, review is necessary.

Conclusion

Whether or not phonic analysis should be taught as part of the reading program is not an issue. Children need this important ability in order to become independent readers. However, in recent years, the matter of phonics instruction has become a major educational issue in the teaching of reading. This issue developed in a round-about way, in that critics of American reading instruction have planted the idea that present day methodology is opposed to teaching phonics and that materials and instruction make no provision for teaching phonic analysis skills.

While both of these premises are false, they are the basis for the debate over "phonetic method *vs* the sight word method." Confusion has resulted because critics, laymen, and teachers are, by the very nature of this debate, forced to take a polar position on phonics instruction. As a result, we have tended to lose sight of *the purpose of phonics instruction as it relates to learning to read.* The "either/or" discussion has covered up and ignored some important educational implications of phonics instruction.

One of the purposes of this book is to identify and explore a number of such educational issues. The following is a brief summary of the points discussed previously:

1. The purpose of phonics instruction, as it relates to reading, is to provide the child with the skill for pronouncing or approximating the pronunciation, of words not known as sight words.
2. The term, *word-analysis skills,* embraces *all* ways in which a child might "solve" a word which he does not recognize.

3. Phonics is but one important part of this total word analysis program. Children solve words by means of unique features ("tt", "ll", "oo", "y"); pictures; structural analysis; context; phonic analysis-as well as utilizing these methods in combination.

4. Children can be taught overreliance on sounding out words. Overreliance on any one of the above approaches is not efficient. The child who can "sound" all words and who *does* sound out all words is an inefficient reader.

5. Early reading instruction should not provide a "set" for sounding each word.

6. Beginning reading instruction should foster a set that "reading is a meaning-getting process." In initial reading instruction, one teaches some words as wholes before teaching sounds of letters in words. Then, as quickly as possible, words should be mastered as sight-recognition vocabulary.

7. When analysis is begun,
   a) words already learned are used as phonic models,
   b) consonants are learned first because their sounds are more consistent than vowel sounds,
   c) words are attacked from left-to-right (more than 80% of words begin with consonants), and
   d) children are taught to use all methods of word analysis (structural, context, phonics).

8. A good phonics program provides for differentiated instruction. The right combination of phonics instruction for "Child A" may be inadequate for "Child B" and excessive for "Child C." For any given child, the right combination of drill on analysis is the *minimum* he needs to arrive at the pronunciation of words whose meanings he presently knows.

A second objective of this material is to present a brief outline of practices which might be used in teaching phonic analysis. The suggestions were intended to be illustrative rather than prescriptive. Some of the principles outlined include:

1. The basis for all instruction in phonics is the ability to discriminate between speech sounds and the ability to visually discriminate between printed letters.

2. having the child memorize rules does not assure that he can, or will, apply these in reading situations.

3. All phonic principles necessary for a child to become an independent reader should be taught.

4. It is not necessary to teach phonic generalizations which have very limited application. The few words covered by such generalizations should be taught as sightwords.

5. Teachers at various grade levels should be familiar with the entire phonics program because of the variability of children's needs in a given classroom.

[**] Editor's note: This is because there is no official or unofficial organization with the authority to select a phonemic spelling system nor an authoratative means of putting it into use.

[1] Ruth E. Oakes, "A Study of the Vowel Situations in a Primary Vocabulary," *Education,* LXXII (May, 1952), p. 604-17; and Theodore Clymer, "The Utility of Phonic Generalizations in the Primary Grades," *The Reading Teacher,* XVI (Jan. 1963), p. 252-58.
[2] William S. Gray, *On Their Own in Reading,* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman & Co. 1960) p. 35-36.

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp17,18 in the printed version]

Book reviews

7. The Next 100 Years, by Isaac Asimov, reviewed by Helen Bowyer

I am frequently appalled at my own stupidity – at the egregious errors of judgement I have made in the past. But since reading pp.39-41 of this year's *World Almanac,* no error has seemed so egregious as that of not postponing my birth till 1950. For in that case I should now be just 18, an ideal age at which to begin that century which these three fine-print pages forecast.

Forecast provisionally, to be sure, for who knows if there will be so much as a **NEXT 10 years**, even a **NEXT 5**? That another **World War** may not end all years for our species? But assuming that we can summon the statesmanship to avoid that insanity, here is what Dr. Isaac Azimov hazzards as the course of terrestrial civilization between now and 2068.

Certainly he is in the position to do that hazzarding. Not only is he Associate Professor of Biochemistry at the School of Medicine of Boston University, he has received the James T. Grady award for science writing from the American Chemical Society. And thin still short of fifty years of age, he is the author of more than 80 books of science fact or fiction, among them the mind-alerting *Pebble in the Sky,* and *I, Robot.*

This article can't begin to detail all that he envisions as to the century ahead of us, but let's start where he does – with the now anxious problem of world population, which is slated to reach six billion bodies – white, black, yellow, brown – by 2000 A.D. But tho 2000 A.D. is only 31 years away, Dr. Azimov looks upon this colossal figure without anxiety. For by that date, he believes, birth control will be so well established over most of the earth that we can keep the terrestrial census at no more than that.

And if all goes well, six billion is a population for which the continents, islands and oceans of our planet can easily find food, housing, clothing, education and health care, and all that on an increasingly higher level as the 2010's, 2020's roll along. Man, to be sure, has always exploited the oceans, but he has never *farmed* them on the vast scale Dr. Azimov foresees. Not only will immense crops of plant life be grown beneath their surface, but the herding and breeding of sea animals will be scientifically organized even better than now are grown oysters and pearls. As for the contributions of terra firma, less and less, as the 2040's and 2050's swirl by, will man be dependent on the cereals, vegetables, fruits, meats on which he lives today. The great trend will be to the food-use of micro-organisms. Algae and yeast can be grown far more rapidly and efficiently. They can be flavored to suit and can be prepared in varieties of form and texture that will outshine most other classes of food. Moreover, they will be carefully designed to supply optimal nutritional needs.

As for the housing of these six billion men, women and children, the oceans will take a new and major hand in that. By 2020, Dr. Azimov thinks probable, they will be offering a supply of deuterium as an energy fuel which will last in quantity for millions of years. With it supplying most of the labor, ghettos and slums will disappear, and in the healthful homes available to all, the

computer will take over most of the present housework, leaving the mother free to become the more and more cultured women which the children of the next 100 years can truly admire as well as love.

As for the children themselves, the new century may not get very far before every year finds its crop of babies better both in body and mind than that of the year before. For in a society where energy in this or that form has displaced most of the labor of the human muscle, and the computer most of the routine labor of the human mind, what point is there in the birth of any but high normal and superior young? Perhaps, says Dr. Azimov, the greatest social controversy of the century ahead of us will be between those who favor an absolute right on the part of society to dictate who may or may not have children and those who dispute man's understanding of what constitutes "excellence" and those who advocate the "Right to parenthood. **[1]**

The goal of controlling quantity and quality of population would be quite impossible without some international agency making full use of computerized equipment. In fact, the computer, as it develops steadily over this new century will make the present division of this planet obsolete. The necessary controls which will keep six billion humans alive and comfortable can only be planet-wide in scope.

We will still be a world of nations in 2068, for tradition and self-esteem will keep us "national" in feeling. But since computers are designed to solve problems on a rational basis, the computerization of the world will be its rationalization as well. It will alter conditions which give rise to social friction, thus minimizing the danger of national wars and internal rioting. And society will, by and large, obey the decisions of computers, because not to do so will bring disaster.

The Central Planetary Computer will keep track of all statistics down to the minutest, for instant recall. The statistical content of a book like this *World Almanac will* be largely computer-prepared and computer-checked, tho it will still require the active and agile intelligence of the human personnel to decide *which* statistics to include and how the whole is to be organized.

With the declining birthrate, the disappearance of routine housework and the conversion of all work into low muscle, high brain endeavor, women will become completely equal to man, economically and socially. In the world of leisure and affluence for both sexes, the greatest industry will be that of supplying what may be called "amusement". Sports and shows of all kinds will still be popular, but there will also be new outlets. Trips to the moon may be common and large space ships may be stationed in orbit `round the earth for the chief purpose of supplying vacationers with no-gravity fun. But matching the emphasis on amusement will be that on education. By 2068 a substantial percentage of the human race will be devoting the major portion of their lives to a continuing program of learning in a variety of fields. Closed circuit television and microfilms will offer dramatic ways of transferring information, and computers will design courses in any subject to match the capacity and temperament of the individual. The Central Library of the Planet will be open to everybody and anything in it will be available on demand thru a computerized copying service.

The more spectacular developments of this **NEXT 100 YEARS**, such as the underground cities which Dr. Azimov foresees, the sizable colony on the moon and the smaller one on Mars, this

review will leave the reader to get from the *World Almanac.* Also the rapid growth of ectogenesis – the development of the foetus outside the human body. This will not only relieve women of the burden of actual child-bearing, it will permit embryos to be nurtured under optimum conditions.

But despite these great advances in man's understanding of himself and his universe says Dr. Azimov, 2068 will still leave two great problems as yet unsolved. In the first place, the gap between the planets of our solar system and those circling the other suns of our Galaxy will still be unbridgeable, and earthly man will still be out of contact with whatever forms of life and who knows what other intelligence akin to ours may be swirling with us around its center. In the second place, a thoro understanding of the human brain may still be beyond us.

But even if so? Unless our present hate and unreason destroy our race, the six billion men, women and children of 2068 will see the opening of still another Next 100 Years whose achievements may make those of 1968-2068 seem by comparison, says Dr.Azimov, little more than that of a colection of bushmen huddled round a brush fire.

There are, however, a few major concerns of this troubled 1968 which Dr. Azimov does not deal in these *World Almanac* pages, tho it is not credible that his mind has not dealt with them. One is the question of human longevity. As of now, the average future lifetime in the United States is 66.7 years for new-born boys and 73.8 for girls. There are a few countries where it is higher, but over most of the world it falls below this. How much will this average rise by 2068, and what will be the physical, mental, temperamental makeup of those who die before the present average, and of those who live beyond it?

Another point he does not touch on is that of a common language, not only for Earth but for those colonies on the Moon and Mars. True, television and microfilms can go some way to overcome the barrier of our present welter of national and tribal tongues, but can anything abolish the need for the spoken and printed word? At this beginning of Dr. Azimov's **Next 100 Years**, English is, of all present languages, the leading candidate for adoption as THE World Language. No other major tongue equals it in richness of vocabulary, shades of meaning, simplicity of grammar and syntax. No other is so widely used in world commerce or so widely taught in the world's schools. But no other, alas, so flagrantly ignores the mind's inherent demands for a reliable phonemic spelling-a demand with which it could so easily comply. And comply not only to the enormous benefit of the foreign-speaking world but us of America, the United Kingdom and all the colonies, where the difficulties of learning its unfortunate spelling retard its handicapped learners by one or two years. Quite apart from the incalculable sums we spend upon the writing and printing of unnecessary silent letters as pointed out by G. B. Shaw, and the difficulty of reconciling *four, more, for, door,* and a *who, do, you, grew, shoe, sue, through,* which should obviously be spelled: *hoo, doo, yoo, groo, shoo, soo, throo.* What harm may we be doing to the minds of the children whose sense of consistency, of analogy, of cause and effect, we so insensately violate at the very age when training in these basic human attributes is more vital to an ongoing civilization than it will ever be again?

[1] see Elmer Pendell: *Sex versus Civilizarion,* Noontide Press, Los Angeles, 1967. $1.00

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 pp18,1 in the printed version]

8. Phonics in Proper Perspective, Second Edition, by Arthur W. Heliman, Ph.D.

Phonics in Proper Perspective, 2nd Edition, Pub. 1968, Charles E. Merrill Co, 121 pp. paperback, $1.56, cloth, $3.16

This new book is not merely a reprint or reissue of the first edition (1964) from which we have edited the lengthy article on pages 11-17, but a complete rewrite brought up to date in consideration of the impact created by Dr. Jeanne Chall's monumentous book, *Learning to Read – the Great Debate,* 1967, as well as many other books and articles in the educational press touching on the rather controversial subject of phonics.

While this new book contains only 18 more pages than the first edition, it contains more subjects and covers them more thoroly. For instance, the newer systems for avoiding the irregular spellings of English are discussed in Chp. 5 – Alternative Approaches to Cracking the Code.

The first chapter is very much like the chapter we used on pages 11-17, which gives the author's ideas on: The Purpose and Limitations of Phonics Instruction. However, new materials appearing as late as Feb. 1968 are included and discussed. The overall picture of phonics, word form, structural analysis, context clues, picture clues, phonic analysis, are all considered and used in their proper turn as they each contribute aid to the pupil. Emphasis is made to show that overreliance on any one or two of these aids is inefficient in word analysis, and is to some degree harmful when used to the exclusion of the other aid forms.

The author tells why consonants should be taught before vowels and suggests an order for presenting both. Naturally, at the time of starting to present consonants, it must first be determined if the pupil can discriminate between similar sounding consonants (and vowels). Next the pupil must be tested to see if the pupil is able to discriminate between similar appearing letters. Then initial consonants are presented and when learned, consonant blends introduced. To be sure, vowels have to be included in these studies but attention is not called to them until later. Consonant substitution, to make new words, is a good way of furthering the pupil's knowledge. 8 rules or consonant generalizations are given for the teacher's benefit but the child is not expected to memorize these. Stimulus words which follow the rules are found to be helpful.

When the vowel sounds are presented, it is the short vowels that are presented first – as these are more frequent, especially in common one-syllable words. One may be surprised to note that the schwa (and its symbol) is now taught as an important vowel sound – important because it is always an indication of an unstresst vowel.

When the pupil is well versed in consonant and vowel sounds, Syllabication, Prefixes and Suffixes are presented along with rules for their determination. Even the accent comes in for its turn in the presentation.

Under the Alternative Approaches to Cracking the Code, there is a brief discussion of prior methods of phonics at the turn of the century. The most recent systems – the Linguistic Approach by Bloomfield and Barnhart, and also Fries, shows how these approaches must first be restricted to regular, short vowel words. It turns out to be code cracking with some missing ingredients. Then when the irregular spellings are presented, they require twice as much time and are not well organized. Other more modern plans for avoiding presenting the irregularities of English, such as the Initial Teaching Alphabet, Diacritical Marking System, Words in Color, Laubach's Learn English the New Way are analyzed and discussed.

But the thing that struck this reviewer with its importance is the conclusion, which is herewith quoted in its entirety:

"A limited number of new approaches to teaching beginning reading have been discussed. Each has a common goal which is teaching the child to "crack the code" of written English. Judged by the traditional laws of learning some of these methods appear a bit awkward. However, each has the redeeming humanitarian virtue of attempting to *temporarily* protect the child from the vagaries of English spellings. For example, i.t.a. changes both the code and word spellings while the linguistic regular spelling approach shelters the child from the words spelled irregularly or irrationally. Each of the code cracking methods is in essence a crutch which does not change the task involved in learning to read. The linguistic approach has the added liability that it does not systematically teach letter-sound relationships. Some children will, of course, make this essential association, but those who do not must be taught this skill before they can become independent readers.

"The many alternative approaches available for cracking the code might be interpreted as evidence that mastering the English system of writing poses a formidable challenge. *There is no question that English spelling reform is long overdue.* The present practice of attempting to teach *all* American youth to read and spell English is the foremost example of conspicuous consumption of a nation's resources since the building of the pyramids. Unfortunately for many children, the belief is still widely held that our economy can still afford this cruel waste.

"Without doubt, the most patriotic and educationally sound endeavor that reading teachers, and their teachers, could follow would be to set a date in the future and decline henceforth to teach another child to read traditional English writing. The brief delay suggested would provide time for a federal commission to devise a sweeping and thoro spelling reform of English.

Unfortunately "this sugestion is not likely to be followed since man is a thinking animal; and he is now busily thinking of numerous "new approaches" to teach archaic English. Furthermore, the federal government has indicated its willingness to raise the ante in support of education. It would be unbecoming of educators not to attempt hundreds of new and devious approaches to the problem *rather than advocating the one logical (and eventually inevitable) solution."*

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin Spring 1969 p19 in the printed version]

9. World Language: Sistemïzd Ënglish

Boston, Mass. U.S.A.

English has and is progressing more than any other as a world language. We should take advantage of this fortunate situation. There is nothing more important than understanding. English is made up of many foreign languages which already makes it international. Most of the literature of the world is in English; English has the greatest number of words – and we need them – one acquires a vocabulary according only to his needs.

For the good of mankind, the advantages of a revised form of English must be considered. A simple international language could save us a great deal of time and trouble: It would facilitate world trade, increase traveling, help eradicate race hatred, and help maintain order.

A simplified form would make it easier for everyone. It would be a compromise – meeting the rest of the peoples of the world part-way, so that everybody would have to put some effort into learning it.

'There are many approaches to the revising suggestion. With a form such as Sistemïzd Ënglish, none of the prose, poetry and songs would be lost. The alphabet would have fewer characters – "k", "q", and "y" would not be used – and only the spelling would be changed – words would be written just as they sound.

To learn Sistemïzd Ënglish, there are only a few very simple rules to follow.

A revised form could be a second language – a world language – which means that the conventional English could continue as it is indefinitely.

It is late and we must have a world language now. Sistemïzd Ënglish can do the best job.

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